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**Quality management—Customer
satisfaction—Guidelines for
complaints handling in
organizations**

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Foreword

This translation has been made based on the original Japanese Industrial Standard established by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry through deliberations at the Japanese Industrial Standards Committee in accordance with the Industrial Standardization Law.

This Standard has been made based on ISO 10002:2004 *Quality management—Customer satisfaction—Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations* for the purpose of making it easier to compare this Standard with International Standard; to prepare Japanese Industrial Standard conforming with International Standard; and to propose a draft of an International Standard which is based on Japanese Industrial Standard.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some parts of this Standard may conflict with a patent right, application for a patent after opening to the public, utility model right or application for registration of utility model after opening to the public which have technical properties. The relevant Minister and the Japanese Industrial Standards Committee are not responsible for identifying the patent right, application for a patent after opening to the public, utility model right or application for registration of utility model after opening to the public which have the said technical properties.

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Quality management—Customer satisfaction— Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations

Introduction

0.1 General This Japanese Industrial Standard has been prepared based on the first edition of ISO 10002 *Quality management—Customer satisfaction—Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations* published in 2004 without modifying the technical contents.

The portions underlined with dots are the matters not stated in the original International Standard.

This Standard provides guidance for the design and implementation of an effective and efficient complaints-handling process for all types of commercial or non-commercial activities, including those related to electronic commerce. It is intended to benefit an organization and its customers, complainants and other interested parties.

The information obtained through the complaints-handling process can lead to improvements in products and processes and, where the complaints are properly handled, can improve the reputation of the organization, regardless of size, location and sector. In a global marketplace, the value of a Standard becomes more evident since it provides confidence in the consistent treatment of complaints.

An effective and efficient complaints-handling process reflects the needs of both the organizations supplying products and those who are the recipients of those products.

Information : Throughout the text of this Standard, wherever the term “product” is used, it can also mean “service”.

The handling of complaints through a process as described in this Standard can enhance customer satisfaction. Encouraging customer feedback, including complaints if customers are not satisfied, can offer opportunities to maintain or enhance customer loyalty and approval, and improve domestic and international competitiveness.

Implementation of the process described in this Standard can

- provide a complainant with access to an open and responsive complaints-handling process,
- enhance the ability of the organization to resolve complaints in a consistent, systematic and responsive manner, to the satisfaction of the complainant and the organization,
- enhance the ability of an organization to identify trends and eliminate causes of complaints, and improve the organization's operations,
- help an organization create a customer-focused approach to resolving complaints, and encourage personnel to improve their skills in working with customers, and
- provide a basis for continual review and analysis of the complaints-handling process.

ess, the resolution of complaints, and process improvements made

Organizations may wish to use the complaints-handling process in conjunction with customer satisfaction codes of conduct and external dispute resolution processes.

0.2 Relationship with JIS Q 9001:2000 and JIS Q 9004:2000 This Standard is compatible with JIS Q 9001 and JIS Q 9004 and supports the objectives of these two standards through the effective and efficient application of a complaints-handling process. It can also be used independently of them.

JIS Q 9001 specifies requirements for a quality management system that can be used for internal application by organizations, or for certification, or for contractual purposes. The process for complaints handling described in this Standard can be used as an element of a quality management system.

This Standard is not intended for certification or for contractual purposes.

JIS Q 9004 provides guidance on continual improvement of performance. The use of this Standard can further enhance performance in the area of complaints handling and increase the satisfaction of customers and other interested parties. It can also facilitate the continual improvement of the quality of products based on feedback from customers and other interested parties.

1. Scope This Standard provides guidance on the process of complaints handling related to products within an organization, including planning, design, operation, maintenance and improvement. The complaints-handling process described is suitable for use as one of the processes of an overall quality management system.

This Standard is not applicable to disputes referred for resolution outside the organization or for employment-related disputes.

It is also intended for use by organizations of all sizes and in all sectors. Annex A provides guidance specifically for small businesses.

This Standard addresses the following aspects of complaints handling:

- a) enhancing customer satisfaction by creating a customer-focused environment that is open to feedback (including complaints), resolving any complaints received, and enhancing the organization's ability to improve its product and customer service;
- b) top management involvement and commitment through adequate acquisition and deployment of resources, including personnel training;
- c) recognizing and addressing the needs and expectations of complainants;
- d) providing complainants with an open, effective and easy-to-use complaints process;
- e) analysing and evaluating complaints in order to improve the product and customer service quality;
- f) auditing of the complaints-handling process;
- g) reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of the complaints-handling process.

This Standard is not intended to change any rights or obligations provided by applicable statutory or regulatory requirements.

NOTE : The International Standard corresponding to this Standard is as follows.

In addition, symbols which denote the degree of correspondence in the contents between the relevant International Standard and JIS are IDT (identical), MOD (modified), and NEQ (not equivalent) according to ISO/IEC Guide 21.

ISO 10002 : 2004 *Quality management—Customer satisfaction—Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations* (IDT)

2. Normative reference The following standard contains provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this Standard. If the indication of the year of coming into effect is given to the referred standard, only the edition of indicated year constitutes the provision of this Standard but the revision and amendment made thereafter do not apply.

JIS Q 9000 : 2000 *Quality management systems—Fundamentals and vocabulary*

NOTE : ISO 9000 *Quality management systems—Fundamentals and vocabulary* is identical with the said standard.

3 Terms and definitions For the purpose of this Standard, the definitions given in JIS Q 9000 and the following definitions apply.

Information : In JIS Q 9000, definition 3.4.2, “product” is defined as the “result of a process” which encompasses four generic product categories: services, software, hardware, and processed materials. Throughout the text of this Standard, wherever the term “product” is used, it can also mean “service”.

3.1 complainant person, organization or its representative, making a complaint

3.2 complaint expression of dissatisfaction made to an organization, related to its products, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected

3.3 customer organization or person that receives a product

EXAMPLE : Consumer, client, end-user, retainer, beneficiary and purchaser. [JIS Q 9000, definition 3.3.5]

3.4 customer satisfaction customer's perception of the degree to which the customer's requirements have been fulfilled

Information : Adapted from JIS Q 9000, definition 3.1.4. The Notes have been deleted.

3.5 customer service interaction of the organization with the customer throughout the life cycle of a product

3.6 feedback opinions, comments and expressions of interest in the products or the complaints-handling process

3.7 interested party person or group having an interest in the performance or success of the organization

Information : Adapted from **JIS Q 9000**, definition 3.3.7. The Example and Note have been deleted.

3.8 objective (complaints-handling) something sought, or aimed for, related to complaints handling

3.9 policy (complaints-handling) overall intentions and direction of the organization related to complaints handling, as formally expressed by top management

3.10 process set of interrelated or interacting activities which transforms inputs into outputs

Information : Adapted from **JIS Q 9000**, definition 3.4.1. The Notes have been deleted.

4 Guiding principles

4.1 General Adherence to the guiding principles set out in 4.2 to 4.10 is recommended for effective handling of complaints.

4.2 Visibility Information about how and where to complain should be well publicized to customers, personnel and other interested parties.

4.3 Accessibility A complaints-handling process should be easily accessible to all complainants. Information should be made available on the details of making and resolving complaints. The complaints-handling process and supporting information should be easy to understand and use. The information should be in clear language. Information and assistance in making a complaint should be made available (see annex B), in whatever languages or formats that the products were offered or provided in, including alternative formats, such as large print, Braille or audiotape, so that no complainants are disadvantaged.

4.4 Responsiveness Receipt of each complaint should be acknowledged to the complainant immediately. Complaints should be addressed promptly in accordance with their urgency. For example, significant health and safety issues should be processed immediately. The complainants should be treated courteously and be kept informed of the progress of their complaint through the complaints-handling process.

4.5 Objectivity Each complaint should be addressed in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner through the complaints-handling process (see annex C).

4.6 Charges Access to the complaints-handling process should be free of charge to the complainant.

4.7 Confidentiality Personally identifiable information concerning the complainant should be available where needed, but only for the purposes of addressing the complaint within the organization and should be actively protected from disclosure, unless the customer or complainant expressly consents to its disclosure.

4.8 Customer-focused approach The organization should adopt a customer-focused approach, should be open to feedback including complaints, and should show commitment to resolving complaints by its actions.

4.9 Accountability The organization should ensure that accountability for and reporting on the actions and decisions of the organization with respect to complaints handling is clearly established.

4.10 Continual improvement The continual improvement of the complaints-handling process and the quality of products should be a permanent objective of the organization.

5 Complaints-handling framework

5.1 Commitment The organization should be actively committed to effective and efficient complaints handling. It is particularly important that this is shown by, and promoted from, the organization's top management.

A strong commitment to responding to complaints should allow both personnel and customers to contribute to the improvement of the organization's products and processes.

This commitment should be reflected in the definition, adoption and dissemination of policy and procedures for the resolution of complaints. Management commitment should be shown by the provision of adequate resources, including training.

5.2 Policy Top management should establish an explicit customer-focused complaints-handling policy. The policy should be made available to, and known by, all personnel. The policy should also be made available to customers and other interested parties. The policy should be supported by procedures and objectives for each function and personnel role included in the process.

When establishing the policy and objectives for the complaints-handling process, the following factors should be taken into account:

- any relevant statutory and regulatory requirements;
- financial, operational and organizational requirements;

- the input of customers, personnel and other interested parties.

The policies related to quality and complaints handling should be aligned.

5.3 Responsibility and authority

5.3.1 Top management should be responsible for the following:

- a) ensuring that the complaints-handling process and objectives are established within the organization;
- b) ensuring that the complaints-handling process is planned, designed, implemented, maintained and continually improved in accordance with the complaints-handling policy of the organization;
- c) identifying and allocating the management resources needed for an effective and an efficient complaints-handling process;
- d) ensuring the promotion of awareness of the complaints-handling process and the need for a customer focus throughout the organization;
- e) ensuring that information about the complaints-handling process is communicated to customers, complainants, and, where applicable, other parties directly concerned in an easily accessible manner (see annex C);
- f) appointing a complaints-handling management representative and clearly defining his or her responsibilities and authority in addition to the responsibilities and authority set out in 5.3.2;
- g) ensuring that there is a process for rapid and effective notification to top management of any significant complaints;
- h) periodically reviewing the complaints-handling process to ensure that it is effectively and efficiently maintained and continually improved.

5.3.2 The complaints-handling management representative should be responsible for the following:

- a) establishing a process of performance (state of implementation) monitoring, evaluation and reporting;
- b) reporting to top management on the complaints-handling process, with recommendations for improvement;
- c) maintaining the effective and efficient operation of the complaints-handling process, including the recruitment and training of appropriate personnel, technology requirements, documentation, setting and meeting target time limits and other requirements, and process reviews.

5.3.3 Other managers involved in the complaints-handling process should, as applicable within their area of responsibility, be responsible for the following:

- a) ensuring that the complaints-handling process is implemented;